

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELIZE 00711 052223Z

11

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-01 DLOS-05

SWF-01 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 L-02 SP-02 AID-05 NSC-05

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 /090 W

----- 096275

R 051601Z DEC 74

FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3834

UNCLAS BELIZE 711

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: N/A

SUBJECT: SURCHARGE ON THE PORT OF BELIZE CITY

1. EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 3, THE SHIPPING LINES SERVING THE PORT OF BELIZE CITY IMPOSED A "CONGESTION" SURCHARGE OF 20 PERCENT ON ALL CARGO LANDED AT BELIZE CITY.

2. THE CAUSE OF THE CONGESTION IS LACK OF SPACE IN THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED, BONDED WAREHOUSES. INDEED CONDITIONS IN THE WAREHOUSES ARE CHAOTIC, BUT THE BLAME FOR THIS IS HARD TO FIX. THE CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT SAYS THAT IMPORTERS FIND IT CHEAPER TO LEAVE CARGO IN THE BONDED WAREHOUSE THAN TO PAY DUTY AND CARRY THE ITEMS AS INVENTORY. IMPORTERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, COMPLAIN THAT SLOWNESS IN THE CUSTOMS CLEARANCE PROCESS COMBINED WITH NONEXISTENT STORING PROCEDURES, THE RESULT OF WHICH IS MISPLACED CARGO, ARE THE CAUSE OF THE CONGESTION.

3. WHATEVER THE CAUSES, SHIPPERS CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THEIR SHIPS HAVE INCREASED DEMURRAGE IN PORT OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. THE AVERAGE TIME IN PORT TWO YEARS AGO FOR ONE COMPANY WAS 30 HOURS, AND NOW IT IS 48 HOURS. THE SURCHARGE, HOWEVER, WILL HAVE TWO IMMEDIATE EFFECTS:

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A. IT WILL INCREASE THE COST OF LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY WHERE

MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF IMPORTS ARE FOR FINAL CONSUMPTION.

B. IT WILL MAKE AIR CARGO, ALREADY VERY COMPETITIVE, EVEN MORE
ATTRACTIVE TO IMPORTERS. GAWF

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Message Attributes

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